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NOTES

The Report of the Librarian of Congress for 1905 (Washington, Government Printing Office) again makes interesting reading and shows the rapid development, under Mr. Herbert Putnam, of the idea of a great national Library for our country. A large part of the present volume is taken up with the splendid collection of engravings from the prints in the Chalcographie of the Louvre presented by the French Government and the facsimiles of copper and wood engravings of the Old Masters given by the German Government. Visitors to the Library at Washington will recall these collections as the most prominent feature of the show rooms open to the public. Important accessions have been made in the Manuscripts Division under the supervision of Mr. Worthington C. Ford, chiefly the papers of the Breckinridge family of Kentucky extending over a hundred and twenty-five years, from 1774 to 1905, presented by Miss Sophonisba Breckinridge of the University of Chicago, papers of the Crittenden family in Kentucky, of Presidents Martin Van Buren and Andrew Johnson, some Virginian manuscripts and others. There have been added also many maps and charts, particularly those of Lord Howe who commanded an English fleet in the Revolutionary War.

Professor A. S. Cook of Yale dedicates "To the Friends of Honest and Capable Government in America" a new version of "Asser's Life of King Alfred" (Ginn) translated from the text of Stevenson's edition of 1904. For a long time it has been customary to regard Asser's "Life" as at least unauthentic, if not apocryphal; but the late researches of Messrs. Plummer and Stevenson, who have studied Alfred's life afresh in the light of the old chronicles, have reinstated Asser's work as in all probability a real biography in Alfred's life-time, even though still to be used with some caution owing to possible interpolations. The favorite story of the cakes, an interpolation of much later date, made by Archbishop Parker, is naturally omitted.

School text-books in English multiply unceasingly. We have on our table a number of new ones from different publishers and editors. Bacon's "Essays or Counsels Civil and Moral," edited by George H. Clarke, late Professor in Mercer University, Georgia, appears as one of Macmillan's Pocket English Classics. A late number of Maynard's English Classics contains the "Sir Roger de Coverley Papers in the Spectator by Addison, Steele and Budgell," edited by Edna H. L. Turpin, and furnished with examination questions by Cornelia Beare.

Two recent numbers of the Athenæum Press Series (Ginn) are "Selections from the Writings of Joseph Addison," edited by Professor Barrett Wendell and former Instructor C. N. Greenough of Harvard, and "Selected Essays of Henry Fielding" edited by G. H. Gerould, Preceptor in Princeton. The make-up of these later books is, as is usual with the series, well-nigh faultless. The Introductions are provided with all the apparatus of modern scholarship and filled with recondite footnotes, the Bibliography is full, the Notes are concise and learned. There is no doubt of the excellence, based on scholarliness and correctness, though that excellence may be accounted somewhat too precise in character and formal in tone.

A modest, but seemingly a very helpful, volume is that on "Specimens of Discourse" contributed by Mr. Arthur L. Andrews, Instructor in Cornell, to Henry Holt's "English Readings." The little book is designed to meet the actual needs of pupils, beginners in writing and in the study of prose style, as found by the editor's experience. The selections are not, save in a very few cases, from the "great writers;" but the descriptions are of American scenery, the narrations of simple facts and experiences, the events are of every day life, and typical paragraphs are taken from current newspapers. The variety, the simplicity and the inherent interest of the contents constitute their attractiveness.

It was to be expected that Mr. Stedman's American Anthology should be the inspiration of numerous smaller books on the same subject issued for so-called practical purposes. Such a

book is "American Poems (1776-1900), with Notes and Biographies" by A. W. Long, Preceptor at Princeton (American Book Company), supported almost entirely in this way upon secondary material. But this ought not to be so far true as to leave uncorrected an occasional error committed by Mr. Stedman or one of the current histories of literature, when a little labor in the library would have revealed the true record. For instance the name of the Virginia poet, John R. Thompson, is not "John Randolph," as Stedman gives it followed by our editor, but *John Reuben*.

A new number of Crowell's Pocket Edition of Handy Volume Classics is the "Selections from the Writings of Benjamin Franklin," edited by U. Waldo Cutler, containing ample extracts from "Poor Richard's Almanac," Franklin's Essays and Miscellanies, and his Personal Letters. Franklin was not only a great American of the eighteenth century, but one of the most representative men of that particular age in the world, both in his virtues and in his failings. Besides this, his is the first important name in American literature as that designation is generally understood.